

4th February 2022

Crematorium Matters – Manager’s Report

Covid Crisis Update

Mourner numbers were kept at 162 during the latest surge in cases and mask wearing strongly encouraged through on-screen messaging.

Achievements

The Music/Webcast system contract has been re-tendered as it had reached the 4-year term. The outcome of the process should be known by the date of the meeting.

Metals Recycling Charity Award

The Over and Above (Cancer & Wellbeing Centre) has been awarded £15,000, paid on 8th December 2021. A cheque presentation by Councillor Walker with associated press release was made on 13th December. As yet the next round of nominations has not opened. Subsequent nomination list:

Families in Grief

North Devon Children’s Holiday Foundation

North Devon Hospice

Cruse

Children’s Hospice SW

Over and Above (North Devon Hospital – Maternity Unit Bereavement Suite)

Clarity

Calvert Trust

Over and Above (Cancer & Wellbeing Centre)

Applications have been received for consideration to be included on the list of charities from:

Alzheimer’s Society – Devon & Cornwall Branch. There are 13,000 dementia sufferers in Devon County Council area. The society has 8 support staff in North Devon who directly support sufferers and their families. Helping link with GPs, support groups and hospices. They help carers adjust to their new life with their loved one and the caring responsibilities as well as supporting both at the end of life stage and after bereavement.

A pilot scheme is also running in Bideford & Northam Surgeries to offer enhanced support with the Older Peoples Mental Health Team bringing support within 4-weeks of diagnosis. Support is also offered to local memory cafes and helping Bideford Town Council Councillors to become ‘Dementia Friends’.

Target Ovarian Cancer. They offer a support line with trained specialist nurses where people ring up about all sorts of issues from their diagnoses to treatment but also, we have a lot of family members ring up when they are bereaved after the loss of a family member to ovarian cancer. In the previous 12 months the charity has provided bereavement support to 23 families in the North Devon/Torridge area.

Over and above – Currently supported with 2 awards (Fern Centre & the Maternity Bereavement Suite). Whilst the suite has been completed, the staff (midwifery students, midwives, doctors and maternity care assistants) require specialist training. The training is supplied by SANDS (Sudden

Infant and Neonatal Death Society) and includes topics including: how to deliver the news, how to support a family, how to support your colleagues, what memories are made, effective communication, informed choice, pregnancy following loss, signposting ongoing support.

In addition, the Fern centre is enhancing its children’s counselling service and this will require additional training for staff. It is requested support continue as a separate award specifically for the increased training requirements whilst retaining the Fern Centre running costs separately.

North Devon Against Domestic Abuse (NDADA). Offers a variety of support including the services of an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) to support victims through the criminal and civil justice system. Their counselling provision supports those victims of abuse, and that can include counselling for those experiencing complex grief. That occurs when a perpetrator of domestic abuse dies or takes their own life, as whilst that may mean the abuse “ends” there are a lot of confusing emotions including (victim) guilt and long-term damage that needs expert support by our specially trained team. There may also be several people from the same family who are receiving counselling and one of those family members may take their own life, and whilst there are other bereavement counselling services in Devon, it needs a knowledge of domestic abuse to help with understanding the complexities of their grief.

Young Lives Vs Cancer. Supports children and young adults (0-25) following a cancer diagnosis. In the last 12 months has supported 14 North Devon families. Most diagnosis and treatment is in Bristol and they offer grants to cover travel and accommodation costs (£4,800 in last year). They maintain accommodation for families (sometimes for weeks at a time) and offer a wide range of support and counselling to children and families through their treatment and preparation for dying where that is the likely outcome. The care teams offer home visits and run support groups and memory days.

Cremation Figures

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
April	102	161	125	139	163	117	150	121	174	124
May	123	117	135	118	126	138	136	137	136	103
June	116	102	123	143	125	129	127	127	126	110
July	111	121	106	111	126	142	133	128	136	123
Aug	106	117	100	109	114	120	106	118	118	116
Sept	104	107	122	127	121	127	106	114	121	131
Oct	101	98	125	140	127	137	132	129	120	119
Nov	129	96	120	108	157	135	127	115	149	131
Dec	100	98	120	128	123	131	119	113	141	122
Jan	159	164	142	131	158	182	169	147	176	139E
Feb	121	116	154	136	137	175	143	133	136	
Mar	144	127	157	151	162	164	145	143	141	
Total	1416	1424	1529	1541	1639	1697	1593	1525	1674	

Garden Improvements

Rowan Exit Sails: Steel supports have been installed and sails ordered.

Larkbear Development – Traffic Management

Following representations by the Crematorium Manager it was agreed that the new camera-enforced bus gate in Old Torrington Road be made 'one-way', permitting crematorium (all) traffic to approach using the existing route as well as Gratton Way whilst having to depart via Gratton Way only.

This was however subject to either traffic calming or a 20mph speed limit along Old Torrington Road being implemented. The funding status for the speed limit change or traffic calming remains unclear as is the consequence if funding was not made available by Devon County Council.

In light of the access benefits for Funeral Directors, the cortege and mourners the Joint Committee may wish to consider if financial support is appropriate in the event a lack of funding risks jeopardising the agreed change to one-way operation only.

Phase B Works (Garage Store/Memorial Room)

On 15th February 2019 the Joint Committee agreed to proceed with Phase B works (demolish garages and rebuild storage in bungalow garden).

Staff changes combined with difficulties during Covid have delayed the works. The new Surveyor has reviewed the project. In light of the underground services within the works area he has proposed that the site for the new storage be within the existing bulk-materials area (upper car-park) and that the hearse waiting area be placed at the entrance using part of the ground cleared by the garage demolition.

A consultancy firm has been asked to report the likely costs and outline proposals which will be available at the meeting for consideration.

In the event there are residual funds, the Surveyor hopes to identify possible funding sources for a site survey for solar panels on Rowan Chapel roof and possibly grants towards the installation.

Children's Funeral Fund

The cost of providing funeral services for the under 18s (including stillbirth) has been claimed from the Government Children's Funeral Fund and this year has resulted in a total of approximately £6,200 being recovered and another £2,300 pending (11 services).

The Joint Committee previously requested that this be reported for consideration regarding the most appropriate use of the income.

The lead gardener has identified modest enhancements to the children's area and the failing natural pond for consideration. Costs and proposals will be produced at the meeting for consideration.